

1 ANATOMICAL DISTAL RADIUS FRACTURE FIXATION PLATE
2 AND METHODS OF USING THE SAME
3

4 This application is a continuation-in-part of U.S. Serial No. 10/664,371, filed
5 September 17, 2003, which is a continuation-in-part of U.S. Serial No. 10/401,089, filed
6 March 27, 2003, both of which are hereby incorporated by reference herein in their
7 entireties.
8

9 BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION
10

11 1. Field of the Invention

12 This invention relates broadly to surgical implants. More particularly, this
13 invention relates to a bone fracture fixation system for distal radius fractures.
14

15 2. State of the Art

16 Fracture to the metaphyseal portion of a long bone can be difficult to treat.
17 Improper treatment can result in deformity and long-term discomfort.
18

19 By way of example, a Colles' fracture is a fracture resulting from compressive
20 forces being placed on the distal radius, and which causes backward or dorsal
21 displacement of the distal fragment and radial deviation of the hand at the wrist. Often, a
22 Colles' fracture will result in multiple bone fragments which are movable and out of
23 alignment relative to each other. If not properly treated, such fractures may result in

1 permanent wrist deformity and limited articulation of the wrist. It is therefore important
2 to align the fracture and fixate the bones relative to each other so that proper healing may
3 occur.

4
5 Alignment and fixation of a metaphyseal fracture (occurring at the extremity of a
6 shaft of a long bone) are typically performed by one of several methods: casting, external
7 fixation, pinning, and plating. Casting is non-invasive, but may not be able to maintain
8 alignment of the fracture where many bone fragments exist. Therefore, as an alternative,
9 external fixators may be used. External fixators utilize a method known as
10 ligamentotaxis, which provides distraction forces across the joint and permits the fracture
11 to be aligned based upon the tension placed on the surrounding ligaments. However,
12 while external fixators can maintain the position of the wrist bones, it may nevertheless
13 be difficult in certain fractures to first provide the bones in proper alignment. In addition,
14 external fixators are often not suitable for fractures resulting in multiple bone fragments.
15 Pinning with K-wires (Kirschner wires) is an invasive procedure whereby pins are
16 positioned into the various fragments. This is a difficult and time consuming procedure
17 that provides limited fixation if the bone is comminuted or osteoporotic. Plating utilizes
18 a stabilizing metal plate typically placed against the dorsal side of a bone, and screws
19 extending from the plate into holes drilled in the bone fragments to provide stabilized
20 fixation of the fragments. However, many currently available plate systems fail to
21 provide desirable alignment and stabilization.

1 In particular, with a distal radius fracture the complex shape of the distal radius,
2 including the prominent volar rim of the lunate fossa, relatively flat volar rim of the
3 scaphoid fossa, and the sometimes prominent base of the styloid process should be
4 accommodated. A fixation device should provide desirable alignment and stabilization of
5 fracture involving the articular surface of the distal radius.

6 SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

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8
9 It is therefore an object of the invention to provide an improved fixation system
10 for distal radius fractures.

11
12 It is another object of the invention to provide a distal radius volar fixation system
13 that desirably aligns and stabilizes multiple bone fragments in a fracture to permit proper
14 healing.

15
16 It is also an object of the invention to provide a distal radius volar plate system
17 which provides support for articular and subchondral surfaces.

18
19 It is an additional object of the invention to provide a distal radius volar plate
20 system which accommodates the anatomical structure of the metaphysis of the distal
21 radius.

1 It is a further object of the invention to provide a distal radius volar plate system
2 which provides support without interfering with ligaments and soft tissues near the edge
3 of the articular surface.

4
5 In accord with these and other objects, which will be discussed in detail below, a
6 distal radius volar fixation system is provided. The system generally includes a plate
7 intended to be positioned against the volar side of the radius, a plurality of bone screws
8 for securing the plate to the proximal fragment of the radius bone, a plurality of bone
9 pegs sized to extend from the plate and into bone fragments at the metaphysis of a radius
10 bone, and one or more K-wires to facilitate alignment and fixation of the plate over the
11 bone and guide the process of application. Preferred bone pegs and peg holes within the
12 plate are provided which facilitate entry and retention of the bone pegs within the peg
13 holes.

14
15 The plate is generally T-shaped, defining an elongate body and a generally
16 transverse head angled upward relative to the body, and includes a first side which is
17 intended to contact the bone, and a second side opposite the first side. The body includes
18 a plurality of countersunk screw holes for the extension of the bone screws there through,
19 and optionally one or more substantially smaller alignment holes. The lower surfaces of
20 the radial and ulnar side portions of the head are contoured upward (in a Z direction)
21 relative to the remainder of the head to accommodate the prominent volar rim of the
22 lunate fossa, the relative flat volar rim of the scaphoid fossa and the prominent ridge at
23 the base of the styloid process. An extension is provided at the head portion along the

1 distal ulnar side of the head to buttress the volar lip (marginal fragment) of the lunate
2 fossa of the radius bone, thereby providing support to maintain the wrist within the
3 articular socket in case of fracture of this very essential area. Moreover, the contoured
4 shape provides a stable shape that prevents rocking of the plate on the bone and maintains
5 anatomical alignment between the fracture fragments. The upper and lower surfaces are
6 chamfered to have a reduced profile that limits potential interface with tendons and soft
7 tissues near the edge of the lunate fossa. The head includes a plurality of threaded peg
8 holes for receiving the pegs therethrough. The peg holes are arranged into a first set
9 provided in a proximal portion of the head, and a second relatively distal set preferably
10 provided in the tapered portion of the head.

11
12 The first set of the peg holes is substantially linearly arranged generally laterally
13 across the head. The line of pegs is preferably slightly oblique relative to a longitudinal
14 axis through the body of the plate. Axes through the first set of holes are preferably
15 oblique relative to each other, and are preferably angled relative to each other in two
16 dimensions such that pegs inserted therethrough are similarly obliquely angled relative to
17 each other. The pegs in the first set of peg holes provide support for the dorsal aspect of
18 the subchondral bone fragments.

19
20 The second set of peg holes is provided relatively distal of the first set. The holes
21 of the second set, if more than one are provided, are slightly out of alignment but
22 generally linearly arranged. The pegs in the second set of peg holes provide support for

1 the volar and central aspects of the subchondral bone, behind and substantially parallel to
2 the articular bone surface.

3
4 A distal alignment hole is provided generally between two peg holes of the second
5 set of peg holes. At the upper surface of the plate, the distal alignment hole is
6 substantially circular, while at the lower surface, the hole is laterally oblong. One or
7 more proximal alignment holes of a size substantially smaller than the peg holes are
8 provided substantially along a distal edge defined by a tangent line to shafts of pegs
9 inserted in the first set of peg holes, and facilitates temporary fixation of the fracture
10 fragments and of the plate to the bone with K-wires. Furthermore, along the body two
11 longitudinally displaced alignment holes are also provided. All of the alignment holes
12 are sized to closely receive individual K-wires.

13
14 The plate may be used in at least two different manners. According to a first use,
15 the surgeon reduces a fracture and aligns the plate thereover. The surgeon then drills K-
16 wires through the proximal alignment holes on the head portion of the plate to
17 temporarily fix the orientation of the head of the plate to the distal fragment and also
18 drills K-wires through the alignment holes in the elongated body portion of the plate to
19 fix this portion to the proximal radius fragment. Once the alignment is so fixed, the
20 fracture is examined, e.g., under fluoroscopy, to determine whether the fracture is
21 reduced in an anatomically correct manner and if the K-wires are properly aligned
22 relative to the articular surface. As the axes of the proximal alignment holes correspond
23 to axes of adjacent peg holes, the fluoroscopically viewed K-wires provide an indication

1 as to whether the pegs will be properly oriented in relation to the subchondral bone of the
2 distal fragment. If the placement is correct, the K-wires maintain the position of the plate
3 over the fracture. The peg holes may then be drilled with confidence that their locations
4 and orientations are proper. If placement is not optimal, the K-wires can be removed and
5 the surgeon has an opportunity to relocate and/or reorient the K-wires and drill again.
6 Since each K-wire is of relatively small diameter, the bone is not significantly damaged
7 by the drilling process and the surgeon is not committed to the initial drill location and/or
8 orientation.

9
10 According to a second use, the plate may be used to correct a metaphyseal
11 deformity (such as malformed fracture or congenital deformity). For such purposes, a K-
12 wire is drilled, e.g., under fluoroscopy, into the bone immediately underneath and parallel
13 to the articular surface in the lateral view until one end of the K-wire is located within or
14 through the bone and the other end is free. The free end of the K-wire is guided through
15 the distal oblong alignment hole of the head of the plate, and the plate is slid down over
16 the K-wire into position against the bone. The oblong alignment hole permits the plate to
17 tilt laterally over the K-wire to sit flat on the bone, but does not permit movement of the
18 plate over the K-wire in the anterior-posterior plane. The surgeon drills holes in the bone
19 in alignment with the peg holes and then fixes the plate relative the bone with pegs. The
20 bone is then cut, and the body of the plate is levered toward the shaft of the bone to re-
21 orient the bone. The body of the plate is then fixed to the shaft to correct the anatomical
22 defect.

1 Additional objects and advantages of the invention will become apparent to those
2 skilled in the art upon reference to the detailed description taken in conjunction with the
3 provided figures.

5 BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

6
7 Fig. 1 is a radial side elevation of a right-hand volar plate according to the
8 invention, shown with pegs coupled thereto;

9
10 Fig. 2 is an ulnar side elevation of a right-hand volar plate according to the
11 invention, shown with pegs coupled thereto;

12
13 Fig. 3 is top view of a right-hand volar plate according to the invention, shown
14 with pegs and screws;

15
16 Fig. 4 is bottom view of a right-hand volar plate according to the invention,
17 shown with pegs coupled thereto;

18
19 Fig. 5 is a perspective view of a right-hand volar plate according to the invention,
20 shown with pegs coupled thereto and K-wires extending through body portion alignment
21 holes and through proximal head alignment holes;

Fig. 6 is a front end view of a right-hand volar plate according to the invention, shown with pegs coupled thereto and K-wires extending through body portion alignment holes and proximal head alignment holes;

Figs. 7 through 12 illustrate a method of performing an osteotomy of the distal radius according to the invention;

Fig 13 is a side elevation of a partially threaded peg according to the invention; and

Fig. 14 is a schematic illustration of a peg coupled within a peg hole.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

Turning now to Figs. 1 through 6, a fracture fixation system 100 according to the invention is shown. The system 100 is particularly adapted for aligning and stabilizing multiple bone fragments in a dorsally displaced distal radius fracture (or Colles' fracture). The system 100 generally includes a substantially rigid T-shaped plate 102, commonly called a volar plate, bone screws 104 (Fig. 3), pegs 106, 108, and K-wires 110 (Figs. 5 and 6). Pegs 106 have a threaded head and a non-threaded shaft, and pegs 108 have both a threaded head and a threaded shaft. Either pegs 106 or 108, or a combination thereof may be used at the discretion of the surgeon. Exemplar pegs are described in more detail

1 in U.S. Pat. No. 6,364,882, which is hereby incorporated by reference herein in its
2 entirety.

3
4 In addition, a preferred partially threaded shaft peg 108 is shown best in Figs. 6
5 and 13. Peg 108 includes a head portion 200 with preferably a single helical machine
6 thread 202 of a first pitch and a shaft 204 portion having one or more threads 206 of a
7 larger second pitch. (The head portion of non-threaded shaft pegs 106 also preferably
8 includes a single helical thread.) The threads 206 preferably extend along a distal portion
9 208 of the shaft 204, and most preferably where such distal portion comprises
10 approximately one-half the length of the shaft. Alternatively, or in addition, one or more
11 pegs may be used where the threads extend along substantially the entirety, or the
12 entirety, or the length of the shaft.

13
14 The volar plate 102 shown in the figures is a right-hand plate intended to be
15 positioned against the volar side of a fractured radius bone of the right arm. It is
16 appreciated that a left-hand volar plate is substantially a mirror image of the plate shown
17 and now described. The T-shaped plate 102 defines an elongate body 116, and a head
18 118 angled upward (in the Z-direction) relative to the head. The angle α between the
19 head 118 and the body 116 is preferably approximately 25°. The head 118 includes a
20 distal buttress 120 (i.e., the portion of the head distal a first set of peg holes 134,
21 discussed below). The plate 102 has a thickness of preferably approximately 0.1 inch,
22 and is preferably made from a titanium alloy, such as Ti-6Al-4V.

Referring to Fig. 4, the body 116 includes four preferably countersunk screw holes 124, 125, 126, 127 for the extension of bone screws 104 therethrough (Fig. 2). One of the screw holes, 127, is preferably generally oval in shape permitting longitudinal movement of the plate 102 relative to the shaft of a bone screw when the screw is not tightly clamped against the plate.

Referring to Figs. 3 and 4, according to one preferred aspect of the plate 102, the head portion 118 includes a first set of threaded preferably cylindrical peg holes 134 (for placement of pegs 106 and/or 108 therein) and a second set of threaded preferably cylindrical peg holes 138 (for placement of pegs 106 and/or 108 therein). Referring to Fig. 14, the peg holes 134, 138 optionally have double lead internal threads 210, 212, with entries to these threads located 180° apart. Each of the threads 210, 212 is adapted to mate securely with the thread 202 on a peg head 200, however thread 202 can only mate with one of the threads 210, 212 at any one time. The depth of each of the double lead internal threads 210, 212 is preferably substantially less than the depth of thread 202 on peg head 200, and most preferably approximately one half such depth. The double lead threads 210, 212 facilitate alignment and entry of the peg head thread 202 into a thread of the peg hole, as the peg will require rotation by at most 180° in a single rotational direction before thread engagement. Furthermore, in distinction from a conical head and hole, the cylindrical double lead thread hole does not compromise the secure interlock attained from full travel of the thread 202 of the peg head 200 through the cylindrical peg hole 134, 138 through, e.g., 900° . Moreover, the combination of double

1 lead thread holes and a single helical thread on the peg head reduces cross-threading by
2 fifty percent.

3
4 Referring back to Figs. 3 and 4, the peg holes 134 of the first set are arranged
5 substantially parallel to a line L_1 that is preferably slightly skewed (e.g., by 5° - 10°)
6 relative to a perpendicular P to the axis A of the body portion 116. Axes through the first
7 set of peg holes (indicated by the pegs 106 extending therethrough) are preferably
8 oblique relative to each other, and are preferably angled relative to each other in two
9 dimensions, generally as described in commonly-owned U.S. Pat. No. 6,364,882, which
10 is hereby incorporated by reference herein in its entirety. This orientation of the pegs
11 operates to stabilize and secure the head 118 of the plate 102 on the bone even where
12 such pegs 106 do not have threaded shafts.

13
14 The second set of peg holes 138 is provided relatively distal of the first set of peg
15 holes 134 and is most preferably primarily located in the buttress 120. Each of the peg
16 holes 138 preferably defines an axis that is oblique relative to the other of peg holes 136
17 and 138. Thus, each and every peg 106, 108 when positioned within respective peg holes
18 134, 138 defines a distinct axis relative to the other pegs. Moreover, the axes of the peg
19 holes 138 are preferably oriented relative to the axes of peg holes 134 such that pegs 106,
20 108 within peg holes 138 extend (or define axes which extend) between pegs (or axes
21 thereof) within peg holes 134 in an interleaved manner.

Referring specifically to Figs. 1, 2, 5 and 6, according to another preferred aspect of the plate 102, in order to approximate the anatomy for ideal fracture support and maintain a low profile, the upper and lower surfaces 140, 142, respectively of the buttress 120 are chamfered, with the chamfer of the lower surface 142 being contoured for the anatomical structure that it will overlie. In particular, the lower surface 142 at an ulnar-side portion 144 of the head portion 118 is elevated primarily in a distal direction to accommodate the bulky volar rim of the lunate fossa, and the lower surface 142 at a radial side portion 146 of the head 118 is elevated laterally relative to the remainder of the head to accommodate a prominence at the radial aspect of the bone, as indicated by the visibility of these lower surfaces in the side views of Figs. 1 and 2 and head-on view of Fig. 6. The contoured shape (with generally three defined planes) provides a stable shape that prevents rocking of the plate on the bone. In addition, the upper and lower surfaces 140, 142 are chamfered to have a reduced profile that limits potential interface with the ligaments and soft tissue (e.g., tendons) near the edge of the articular surface. A distal extension 148 is also provided at the ulnar side portion 146 to further buttress the volar lip (volar marginal fragment of the lunate fossa) of the articular socket of the radius bone, thereby providing support to maintain the wrist within the articular socket.

Referring specifically to Figs. 3 and 4, according to a further preferred aspect of the invention, the plate 102 is provided with body alignment holes 150, proximal head alignment holes 152a, 152b, 152c (generally 152), and a distal head alignment hole 154, each sized to closely accept standard Kirschner wires (K-wires), e.g., 0.7 – 1.2 mm in diameter. The upper openings of all the alignment holes 150, 152, 154 are substantially

1 smaller in diameter (e.g., by thirty to fifty percent) than the shafts of screws 104
2 (approximately 3.15 mm in diameter) and the shafts of pegs 106, 108 (approximately
3 2.25 mm in diameter). The body alignment holes 150 are longitudinally displaced along
4 the body portion 116 and provided at an oblique angle (preferably approximately 70°, as
5 shown in Fig. 5) relative to the lower surface 158 of the body portion 116. The proximal
6 head alignment holes 152 alternate with the peg holes 134. A tangent line H to the
7 distalmost points of the head alignment holes 152 is preferably substantially coincident or
8 closely parallel with a line tangent to points on the circumferences of the shafts of pegs
9 106 inserted through holes 134 adjacent the head portion 118 of the plate 102. With
10 respect to the proximal head alignment holes, it is appreciated that a shaft 106a of a peg is
11 generally smaller in diameter than a head 106b of a peg (Fig. 6). Thus, a line tangent to
12 the peg holes 134 (each sized for receiving the head 106b of peg 106) will be closely
13 located, but parallel, to a line tangent to a distalmost point on the respective alignment
14 hole 152. Nevertheless, for purposes of the claims, both (i) a tangent line which is
15 preferably substantially coincident with a line tangent to points on the circumferences of
16 the shafts of pegs and (ii) a tangent line to a set of peg holes shall be considered to be
17 “substantially coincident” with a line tangent to a distalmost point of an alignment hole
18 152. Axes through alignment holes 152 preferably generally approximate (within, e.g.,
19 3°) the angle of an axis of an adjacent peg hole 134. Moreover, the axis through each
20 proximal alignment hole 152 is preferably oriented substantially equidistantly between
21 the axes through peg holes 134 on either side of the alignment hole. As such, K-wires
22 110 inserted into the proximal alignment holes 152 (and extending coaxial with the axes
23 therethrough) define a virtual surface which is substantially the same virtual surface

1 defined by pegs 106, 108 inserted through peg holes 134. This common virtual surface
2 follows the dorsal aspect of the subchondral bone. Thus, as described in more detail
3 below, the insertion of K-wires 110 through proximal alignment holes 152 provides a
4 visual cue to the surgeon regarding the alignment of the plate 102 and subsequently
5 inserted pegs 106, 108. Distal head alignment hole 154 is provided between the central
6 and radial-side peg holes 138, and has a circular upper opening, and a laterally oblong
7 lower opening, as shown best in Fig. 6.

8
9 The plate may be used in at least two different applications: fracture fixation and
10 correction of a metaphyseal deformity. In either application, an incision is first made
11 over the distal radius, and the pronator quadratus is reflected from its radial insertion
12 exposing the entire distal radius ulnarly to the distal radioulnar joint. For fracture
13 fixation, the surgeon reduces the fracture and aligns the plate 102 thereover. The surgeon
14 then drills preferably two K-wires 110 through respective body alignment holes 150, and
15 preferably a plurality of K-wires through selected proximal head alignment holes 152 at
16 the location at which the surgeon believes the pegs 106, 108 should be placed based on
17 anatomical landmarks and/or fluoroscopic guidance. The K-wires temporarily fix the
18 orientation of the plate to the distal fragment. While the fixation is temporary, it is
19 relatively secure in view of the fact that the body alignment holes 150, proximal head
20 alignment holes 152, and K-wires 110 therethrough are angled in different orientations
21 relative to the lower surface of the plate. Once the alignment is so fixed, the fracture is
22 examined, e.g., under fluoroscopy, to determine whether the K-wires 110 are properly
23 aligned relative to the articular surface. As the axes of the proximal head alignment holes

152 correspond to axes of the adjacent peg holes 134, the fluoroscopically viewed K-wires 110 provide an indication as to whether the pegs 106, 108 will be properly oriented. If the placement is correct, the K-wires 110 maintain the position of the plate 102 over the fracture while holes in the bone are drilled through the screw holes 124, 125, 126, 127 for the screws 104 and peg holes 134, 138 for pegs 106, 108, with confidence that the locations and orientation of the screws and pegs inserted therein are anatomically appropriate. In addition, where pegs 108 are used, due to the difference in pitch between the head threads 202 and shaft threads 206, slight compression of a distally or dorsally displaced fragment toward a proximal fragment or bone (e.g., 1.5 mm of travel) is effected even though the head 200 will lock relative to the head 118 of the plate 100. Once the screws 104 and pegs 106, 108 have secured the plate to the bone, the K-wires are preferably removed.

If fluoroscopic examination indicates that placement of the K-wires 110 is not optimal, the K-wires can be removed and the surgeon has an opportunity to relocate and/or reorient the K-wires and drill again. Since each K-wire is of relatively small diameter, the bone is not significantly damaged by the drilling process and the surgeon is not committed to the initial drill location and/or orientation.

The pegs 106 within peg holes 138 define projections that provide support at the volar aspect behind the articular surface of the bone surface. The sets of pegs 106, 108 through peg holes 134, 138 laterally overlap so that the pegs preferably laterally alternate to provide closely-spaced tangential cradling of the subchondral bone. A preferred

1 degree of subchondral support is provided with four peg holes 134 (and associated pegs)
2 through the proximal portion of the head 118 of the plate, and three peg holes 138 (and
3 associated pegs) through the distal portion of the head 118. The fracture fixation system
4 thereby defines a framework which substantially tangentially supports the bone fragments
5 in their proper orientation. In accord with an alternate less preferred embodiment,
6 suitable support may also be provided where the pegs 106 and 108 are parallel to each
7 other or in another relative orientation or with fewer peg holes and/or pegs.

8
9 The method particularly facilitates stabilization of a metaphyseal fracture which
10 may include a smaller distal bone fragment spaced apart from a larger proximal fragment.
11 The insertion of one or more threaded pegs 108 (preferably in conjunction with several
12 non-threaded pegs 106) in which the threads on the shaft 206 have a pitch greater than the
13 threads 202 on the head 200 causes a limited amount of compression of the smaller distal
14 bone fragment toward the larger proximal bone fragment, and thus toward the plate.

15
16 According to a second use, the plate may be used to correct a metaphyseal
17 deformity 200 (such as malformed fracture or congenital deformity), as shown in Fig. 7.
18 For such purposes, a K-wire 110 is drilled into the bone parallel to the articular surface S
19 in the lateral view under fluoroscopy (Fig. 8). The free end of the K-wire 110 is guided
20 through the oblong distal head alignment hole 154, and the plate 102 is slid down over
21 the K-wire into position against the bone (Fig. 9). The oblong alignment hole 154
22 permits the plate 102 to tilt laterally over the K-wire 110 to sit flat on the bone, but does
23 not permit tilting of plate relative to the K-wire in the anterior-posterior (sagittal) plane.

1 Once the plate 102 is seated against the bone, the surgeon drills holes in the bone in
2 alignment with the peg holes 134, 138 (Fig. 3) and then fixes the plate relative the bone
3 with pegs 106, 108 (Fig. 10). The K-wire 110 is removed. The bone is then saw cut at
4 202 proximal the location of the head 118 of the plate 102 (Fig. 11), and the body 116 of
5 the plate is levered toward the proximal diaphyseal bone 204, creating an open wedge
6 206 at the deformity (Fig. 12). When the body 116 of the plate 102 is in contact and
7 longitudinal alignment with the diaphysis of the bone, the bone distal of the cut has been
8 repositioned into the anatomically correct orientation relative to the shaft of the bone.
9 The body 116 of the plate 102 is then secured to the bone with screws 104. Post-
10 operatively, the open wedge in the bone heals resulting in an anatomically correct distal
11 radius.

12
13 While fixed single-angle pegs have been disclosed for use with the plate (i.e., the
14 pegs may be fixed in respective threaded peg holes 134, 136 only coaxial with an axis
15 defined by the respective peg holes), it is appreciated that an articulating peg system,
16 such as that disclosed in co-owned U.S. Pat. No. 6,440,135 or co-owned and co-pending
17 U.S. Serial No. 10/159,612, both of which are hereby incorporated by reference herein in
18 their entireties, may also be used. In such articulating peg systems, the peg holes and
19 pegs are structurally adapted such that individual pegs may be fixed at any angle within a
20 range of angles. In addition, while less preferable, one or both sets of the pegs may be
21 replaced by preferably blunt tines which are integrated into the plate such that the plate
22 and tines are unitary in construct. Similarly, other elongate projections may be coupled
23 to the plate to define the desired support.

1

2 There have been described and illustrated herein embodiments of a fixation plate,
3 and particularly plates for fixation of distal radius fractures, as well as a method of
4 aligning and stabilizing a distal radius fracture and performing an osteotomy. While
5 particular embodiments of the invention have been described, it is not intended that the
6 invention be limited thereto, as it is intended that the invention be as broad in scope as the
7 art will allow and that the specification be read likewise. Thus, while particular
8 materials, dimensions, and relative angles for particular elements of the system have been
9 disclosed, it will be appreciated that other materials, dimensions, and relative angles may
10 be used as well. In addition, while a particular number of screw holes in the volar plate
11 and bone screws have been described, it will be understood another number of screw
12 holes and screws may be provided. Further, fewer screws than the number of screw holes
13 may be used to secure to the plate to the bone. Also, fewer or more peg holes and bone
14 pegs may be used, preferably such that at least two pegs angled in two dimensions
15 relative to each other are provided. In addition, while a particular preferred angle
16 between the head and body has been disclosed, other angles can also be used. Moreover,
17 while the cylindrical double lead thread hole and single thread head interface has been
18 disclosed with respect to a fracture plate for distal radius fractures, it is appreciated that
19 such a system has advantage to other orthopedic stabilization devices such as fragment
20 plates (which may be rectangular in shape or a different shape) and plates specifically
21 designed for fractures of other bones. Similarly, a threaded peg (i.e., locking screw) with
22 threads of different pitches on the head and along the shaft may also be used in other
23 applications. Furthermore, while a double lead thread is preferred for use with a peg

1 having a single thread on its head, it is appreciated that, e.g., a triple lead thread can be
2 used where the entry leads are angularly offset by 120°. Such will reduce cross threading
3 by two-thirds, but will also reduce hole thread depth further. It will therefore be
4 appreciated by those skilled in the art that yet other modifications could be made to the
5 provided invention without deviating from its spirit and scope.